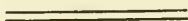


as precisely dated as possible. So far, of *Hyles lineata livornica* we have received reports of over 30, of which 16 were from April 2nd to 10th, 10 from April 16th to 21st and several remaining to be exactly dated. Most were seen in light traps, but several were found at rest by day, and two at flowers at dusk; the range extends near the coast from Cornwall to east Sussex and on the west from Cardinganshire to north Lancashire, and inland to Surrey, Berkshire and west Kent.

Numbers of *Cynthia cardui* reported approach 100, also split into two periods and with similar distribution, but reaching more widely to Worcestershire, Yorkshire and Cumbria. Other immigrant species already reported in April singly or in small numbers are *Vanessa atalanta*, *Macroglossa stellatarum*, *Spodoptera exigua*, *Caradrina clavipalpis*, *Mythimna unipuncta*, *Euchromius ocella* and *Nomophila noctuella*. Rather suprisingly, *Autographa gamma* appears to have been absent. Lack of warmth in late April and early May may have prevented successful local breeding, and we would be interested in receiving reports of larvae, especially for *livornica*, which in the past have been found on vine, fuschia, bedstraw and many other plants.



SMALL TORTOISESHELL BUTTERFLY: *AGLAIS URTICAE* L.: AN UNUSUAL ABERRATION — On April 29th my colleague John Harrison received a letter from a listener to the BBC wildlife radio programmes, Miss Hazel Petcher, enclosing with it a colour photograph of two *Aglais urticae* L. on the flowers of the ice-plant *Sedum spectabile*. One of these she had been unable to identify because of its strange appearance. When the photograph was passed to me for an opinion I concluded that this individual was intermediate between ab. *semiichnusoides* Pronin and ab. *conjuncta* Neuberg, although it had very wide whitish margins to the forewings (see Russwurm, A.D.A., 1978. *Aberrations of British Butterflies*. Clasesy, Farringdon).

Unfortunately, Miss Petcher's photograph had been taken with a standard wide angle lens and does not show the insect in close-up. It is therefore impossible to see enough detail for a positive identification; even so, it is a very striking aberration. I sent it to J. M. Chalmers-Hunt, who considered it comes near to ab. *conjuncta*. The photograph was taken in the observer's garden at Barlestone, near Nuneaton, Warwickshire in the late summer of 1984. — J. F. BURTON, B. B. C. Natural History Unit, Broadcasting House, Bristol, BS8 2LR.